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speech. Dr. D. C. Gilmore believes that the Pwo dialect branched off from the parent stem earlier than the Sgaw, but kept the original nasals and, being in closer contact with outside races, adopted more outside words.[9] The Sgaw has dropped the final nasals, because they were more difficult to pronounce, but has kept the original form of the language to a greater extent than the Pwo.

The fact that the Karen have used bronze drums for many generations has, I think, a bearing on their racial relationship. These remarkable drums have only recently been studied by Western scholars, and their full significance is still a matter for investigation. These drums were formerly thought to be of Chinese origin, but it seems that they are to be attributed to aboriginal tribes, found in what is now Tong King and Yunnan by the Chinese generals, Ma Yuon (41, A.D.) and Chu-Ko Liang (230, A.D.), who conquered these territories for the Chinese.[10]

The upper portion of Camboja is now considered to be the original home of these drums. They formed part of the possessions of the chiefs and were considered very precious, each being worth from eight to ten oxen. Chu-ko Liang is reported to have exacted sixty-three bronze drums as tribute from the barbarians and to have taken them back with him. Among the peoples of Burma the Karen seem to be the only race that has made use of these drums. They do not manufacture them, but buy them from the more industrious Shans, who do not appear to set much store by them.[11] Among the Karen, until recent times, the owner of one of these instruments was considered of more worth than a man who had seven elephants. A drum often formed the ransom of a village or the dowry of a maiden. Although so valued a possession often belongs to a chief, it may belong to any one who can purchase it.

It may have been from the Karen that the Chinese generals exacted part or all of their tribute. If so, this people was living in the mountains of Yunnan at the beginning of the Christian era.

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[9] D. C. Gilmore, "Phonetic Changes in the Karen Languages" in *Journal, Burma Research Society*, Vol. VIII, Pt. II, pp. 122, ff.

[10] Several pamphlets and articles in anthropological journals deal with these drums. The most extensive work on the subject, which is in German, is by Franz Heger and is entitled *Alte Metalltrommeln aus Sudost-Asien*, Leipzig 1902. An excellent short work entitled "Anciens Tambours de Bronze," is by H. Parmentier and is printed in the *Bulletin l'Ecole d' Extreme-Orient*, Hanoi, 118. See also Chapter XIII on Bronze Drums, pp. 115-126.

[11] W. W. Cochrane, in *The Shans*, mentions the Shan terms of Tagaung or Ta Kaung and Mogaung or Mong-Kaung as denoting, respectively, Drum Ferry and Drum Town, and on page 62 he says: "They took also a palace drum, whose reverberations could call the people together, daunt enemies, or bring rain in time of drought." He makes no further reference to their use.

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of the supply of these nuts for all Burma. The trees bearing them are tall slender palms *(Areca Catechu)*, which flourish in moist mountain valleys where they are shaded by larger trees. The nuts grow in clusters just below the crown of leaves. A tree may produce as many as four hundred nuts a year, which are sold in baskets at three or four rupees a basket. There are several gardens that number these palms by the thousands and many others by the hundreds.

Plantain gardens are cultivated on the bottom-lands near the rivers, where there are rich alluvial deposits. Plantains or bananas, of which many varieties exist, are comprised in the genus *Musa*. The stem grows from four to fifteen feet in height and produces sprouts, which are set out at the end of the rainy season and begin to bear by the next year. The new plants send out sprouts in their turn, these growing from the sides of the herb and continuing its life indefinitely. Some varieties of the plantain in the hill-country bear very delicious fruit, which I have almost never seen on the plains. As far as I know it is raised for home consumption, although it may be sold in a few cases to Burman and Shan traders for a small price.

In the Toungoo and Moulmein districts oranges are extensively grown. The groves are along the well-watered valleys, and the fruit is ripe in late September and in October. Nothing has been done, so far as I am aware, to improve the varieties, but a ready market is open to the fruit produced. The Karens bring the supply down to Toungoo in dugouts, and sell it to traders on the river bank at prices varying from one to three or four rupees per hundred, according to the size and quality of the fruit.

A few years ago coffee was widely planted in the Toungoo district; but a blight ruined the greater part of the groves, and the industry ceased to develop. A little is still raised here and there, but it is of an inferior grade.

Tobacco is grown along the sandy banks of the rivers, not in large quantities but sufficient for home consumption and petty trading. It is cured in the most primitive way and consumed in many forms.

I have been informed that in the early days the Karen trained the vines of the betel leaf creeper *(Piper Betel)* to run up a certain kind of rough-barked tree, which a few vines would completely cover with their glossy green foliage, supplying a large crop of leaves and thereby a considerable income for the possessor of such

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243 442 In these days it is the usual practice to sell the grain to the traders directly from the threshing-floor. Sometimes it is stored for a few months in the hope of an advance in price, but most of the smaller cultivators are compelled by their poverty to sell at once. The buyers may be Burmans, but in these later years are more often Chinese. A few Karens have done some trading in paddy, although they are generally not so successful as the traders of the other nationalities.

343 The grain kept for family use is stored in bins of bamboo made in the shape of great baskets or "weh." These "weh" vary in size from those having double the diameter of a bushel-basket up to the huge ones of ten or twelve feet in diameter and of equal height. They are set upon platforms several feet above the ground and adjoining or close to the house. The planks forming the bottom are firmly secured together and coated with cow-dung. After a bin has been filled, the top is covered with a layer of straw, well packed in, and a thick coating of cow-dung is spread over it to seal the grain.

421 435 It is not my purpose in this work to enter into a detailed economic study of Karen agriculture. Here I have but a few observations to offer. Under the conditions obtaining just before the World War, the economic outlook for the Karen cultivator was none too good. The Karen people are no more provident than the Burmese. At the beginning of the season they borrow money, for which they must pay one hundred baskets of paddy for fifty rupees of money.[7] If they have no oxen of buffaloes of their own they must hire them, paying from fifty to sixty rupees a yoke for the former and ten rupees additional each for the latter. To hire a man to work in the rainy season and to plow costs about the same as paying for the use of a team of oxen. If he is employed until the threshing is finished, he costs another fifty rupees. The yield per acre varies all the way from twenty-five to seventy baskets, according to the quality of the land and whether a little manure has been used or not. For many years the price of paddy remained close to one hundred rupees for one hundred baskets, being sometimes a little below and at others a few rupees above that price. Before the war competition and speculation had forced the price up gradually, until it reached a maximum of one hundred and thirty-five rupees.

[7] The size of baskets varies in different districts, ranging in capacity from forty to sixty pounds. Those having a capacity of forty-six pounds are now considered to be of standard size. As the price varies inversely with the size, the result is about the same.

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No one can presume to predict the outcome of the present unsettled conditions. We can only hope that better days are in store for the cultivators, whether Burman or Karen.

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If, before the war, a man owned his field and cattle without encumberance or other debts, he could till some twenty acres and make a comfortable living for himself and family. If, however, he was under the necessity of borrowing money and hiring men and cattle, he could hardly keep his head above water.

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There are some Karens who own large fields. They may have acquired them by careful management, by purchase, or by foreclosing loans. Many of these proprietors make a business of hiring out their fields to men who cultivate them at a rental of from ten to fifteen baskets of paddy per acre, the cultivator supplying his own materials and help. In case the owner has oxen, he rents them at the usual price. In addition, he usually makes a loan of cash to his tenant, on which he gets a big return, namely, a hundred baskets of paddy for the sum of fifty rupees for six months. If the tenant borrows from a money-lender, he has to pay anywhere from fifteen to fifty percent a year for it.

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On the plains the cultivator is almost entirely dependent on his single crop of paddy. If high water has washed out his first settings, there is not time enough left to raise other produce after the water has disappeared. Under these circumstances they sometimes plant sesame, but it requires only a little less time to mature than paddy. The lack of water in the dry season renders cultivation impossible without extensive irrigation.

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Along the river-bottoms may be found a few plantain groves, patches of tobacco, sugar-cane, or vegetables; but these are unusual sights. They may add a little to the cultivator's income. But very few persons derive their chief support from such gardens.

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The Karen on the plains do not observe the old religious customs of the hill people. Many times they resort to Burmese soothsayers to prognosticate the proper times for planting, reaping, and other tasks. Not a few, however, follow the old ceremonies in greater or less part. A ceremonial similar to "theh a hkü" in the hills [8] is observed on the plains where it is designated "mo a si." It is performed when the paddy is set out. Offerings are seldom seen along the paths in this region, but when the paddy has been winnowed an offering is made to "Hpi Bi Yaw" by transferring the rim of earth around a crab's burrow to the summit of the pile of

[8] See ante, pp. 78, 79.

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Concerning their origin much that is legendary has been written. In the *Karen Thesaurus* we are told in substance that these drums ("klo oh tra oh") are very expensive and are owned in Lower Burma by a few very wealthy persons, who make offerings of food and liquor to them annually, fearing an early death if they fail to do this. The drums are said by some to have been brought from the "K' wa" country and by others from the "Swa" tribe.[2] Those who went to buy these objects paid according to the number of frogs on them, the price of one with two frogs being twenty rupees. The buyer put down the price and took away the drum, after which the owner came and got his money. If the buyer did not leave the money, he risked losing his way and being overtaken and eaten by the owner. The drums are used in making a noise like that of a gong.[3]

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Dr. Francis Mason, writing at Toungoo in 1868, speaks of these drums under the name of "kyee-zees," and is better informed than the writer in the *Thesaurus* in saying that they are obtained from the Shan. He also states that the Karen distinguish ten different kinds of drums according to sound and have a different name for each kind. Dr. Mason tells us that the best-sounding drums are worth a thousand rupees apiece, while the poorest bring only one hundred each. Dr. Mason continues: "The possession of Kyee-zees is what constitutes a rich Karen. No one is considered rich without one, whatever may be his other possessions. Everyone who has money endeavors to turn it into Kyee-zees, and a village that has many of them is the envy of the other villages and it is often the cause of wars to obtain possession of them." [4]

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Some of the Karens have told me that in the beginning these drums were obtained from the "Yu" people, who seem to have been the Jung or Yung who occupied Yunnan in ancient times.[5] Indeed, various indications point to the probability that the drums existed or were in use in Yunnan when the ancestors of the Karen passed through there from their home in western China into Burma,

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[2] The Swa are mentioned in some of the old Karen tales and appear to have been wild cannibals, of whom but little was known. Their location seems uncertain. Some of the tales place them beyond the great waters, while others suggest that they live to the north. Probably the references are to the Waer, who are one of the head-hunting tribes still living in the northern Shan States, on the Chinese frontier.

[3] *The Karen Thesaurus*, 1847, Vol. I, pp. 327, ff.

[4] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1868, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. II, pp. 128, ff.

[5] Mr. Taw Sein Ko, in *Annual Archaeological Report*, Burma, 1917, pp. 22. 23. Mr. Po Lin Te writes in the *Rangoon Gazette*, Sept. 27, 1919, that the Yu were the oldest of five families who emigrated from the Sandy River and were, therefore, entitled to use the drums.